Echoes of Betrayal

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Echoes of Betrayal

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Summary

What if, instead of leaving Will behind at the end of season 2, Hannibal brought him along? Now, Will is being kept captive by the killer, and is conflicted between wanting his freedom, and wanting to be loved and praised by Hannibal. Will would do anything to get his approval, even if that means losing his humanity and committing horrible acts.

Chapter 1

Will didn't know where he was. The last thing he remembered was bleeding out next to Abigail on Hannibal's kitchen floor. Now, he was awakening to what could only be a nightmare. His stomach still throbbed in pain, but he must have been given medical treatment, because he wasn't still bleeding.

He felt like he was back in captivity, wrapped in a straitjacket and wearing that fucking muzzle again. He was strapped down to what he guessed was a metal table of some kind, much like where an autopsy would be performed. Turning his head from side to side, he appeared to be in a basement of sorts, though dungeon may have been a more accurate term. Plastic sheets lined the walls, and the concrete floor included a large drain, like a butcher's shop. Will had a guess as to what specifically was being butchered down here.

His frantic thoughts were interrupted by footsteps. From the sound of it, the footsteps were descending a set of stairs, though Will could not crane his neck enough to see it. He didn't need to see; he knew who it was.

"I see you're awake."

The casualness of the statement almost made Will laugh through the anxiety, but he fought it back.

"What the fuck is this? What did you do?" The panic was starting to take over. Will thrashed in his bindings, succeeding in doing nothing but exhausting himself.

Hannibal stepped into view now, composed and pristine as always. He regarded Will with a look that betrayed no emotion, except maybe hunger. His eyes ran along Will's body, taking in every detail. He reached out a hand and teased his fingers through Will's curls. The touch made Will shiver, despite his disgust. It seemed that after all that he had been through, Hannibal still had a strange allure Will couldn't deny.

"Calm yourself my dear, this is all merely a precaution. To be perfectly frank, this is a mercy on my part. I've decided to forgive you for your betrayal. This setup will only be until I can trust that you won't betray me again." His fingers traced down Will's jaw. "If it helps at all though, I think this look works for you." His expression shifted for a brief moment, lips twisting up into a smile before it disappeared again.

Will wanted to shy away from the touch, but something in him craved it, leaning into the warmth of his fingers. Surely, Hannibal could feel his racing pulse. Hannibal retracted his hand and began to fiddle with something Will could not see. There was a grinding of gears, and Will found the table he was strapped to lifting and tilting, putting Will in what was essentially a standing position. Now, he could see the room more clearly, including a detail he had previously missed.

Tied to a chair that had previously been out of Will's line of sight, was a woman, unconscious. She had thick, curly red hair, that fell around her face like fire. Will knew her

face immediately; it was one he had pretended to kill only months before.

“What the fuck is Freddie Lounds doing here?”

Hannibal simply walked over to gently brush the hair off of her face. “You had previously pretended to kill her to gain my trust. Now, I’m giving you the chance to do it for real. Give me a reason to trust you again.”

“What? How?” Will’s questions were coming out in broken pieces now, as his panic began to build even higher. His breath was shallow, and he was reaching full panic attack.

Hannibal only smiled and approached Will. There was a sound like straps being undone, and Will found himself slumping to the ground, his legs unprepared to hold his weight after spending an undetermined amount of time strapped to the table unconscious. Hannibal did little to aid him, only shifting his body to get access to the buckles and straps holding the straitjacket on. Will lacked the energy to resist as his body was moved by the larger man, only focusing on keeping his breathing even enough to not pass out.

Eventually, the jacket was removed, and Will’s arms were free. Before Will could even think about trying to run or fight, he felt a new shackle being placed on him. It wasn’t tight enough to constrict breathing, but enough to let Will know what it was. There was even the jingle of tags hanging from it.

“I had this collar custom-made. It is a modified shock collar that will allow me to remind you when you step out of line. It has a locking mechanism that only I have the key to. I recognize that the straitjacket isn’t the best long-term solution, and can have negative consequences on your body, so that will only be used when I can’t keep an eye on you.”

“What am I to you? A pet?” The muzzle made moving his jaw enough to speak difficult, so his words were coming out muddled.

Hannibal ran a hand through Will’s hair. “Perhaps.” He forced Will up into a proper sitting position before standing and approaching a nearby table of medical supplies. He returned to Will holding a large hunting knife. He held it out to Will handle first. “I could use a hunting dog.”

Almost in a trance, Will reached for the knife. His shaking hands gripped the weapon, and for a moment, he pictured himself shoving it into his captor’s face. Evidently, Hannibal could see the thought plastered across Will’s face, because he held up a small remote, pressing the button.

In that moment, Will experienced some of the worst pain of his life. Every nerve in his body was on fire, and all of his muscles seized up. It was only a few seconds, but it felt like an eternity. When it was over, he was left slumped on the ground, breathing heavily.

“I promise you; I can make it hurt worse if you try anything to hurt me. Now…”

Will’s gaze turned to the reporter. He watched as she began to stir, eyes fluttering open. Will, not wanting to prolong this, began to steady himself. He managed to force his feet underneath

him and stand up, though shakily. The knife was gripped tight in his hand as he approached Freddie. At the moment, he was of two minds. Part of him wanted to fight this, to put the knife in his tormentor's chest and run away from all of this. The other part of him remembered the praise he had been given when Hannibal had thought he had killed for him before. How proud he was. As much as he didn't want to admit it, Will craved Hannibal's attention, craved his praise. It was an intoxicating siren song that Will did not have the strength to fight. Will would do almost anything to be praised like that again, to be seen as a prize, an equal. No one understood Will Graham like Hannibal Lector did, though that may have been due to the fact that Hannibal had all but created the thing that Will had become.

He would kill anyone if that man asked him to, including maybe himself, and Hannibal would do the same. So, while Will did not want to kill Freddie Lounds, he would, just so he could feel that rush again, that joy.

And that was why the last thing the doomed reporter saw was Will Graham, collared and muzzled like a rabid dog, eyes blank and glassy with shaking hands, and Hannibal Lector, watching with a proud smile on his face. He grabbed her hair, forcing her head back to look at him, knife pressed against her neck. His blank expression broke for a moment, as he looked back to Hannibal with a vague smile, who gave him an encouraging nod. He turned back to Freddie, smile widening.

"This is my design."

Chapter 2

After he had exhausted himself on Freddie, Will was too tired to fight Hannibal as he had been picked up bridal style and carried out of the basement. Hannibal had stripped Will down and bathed him in a large bathtub, scrubbing him all over with sweet smelling soap.

Now, Will was clean, and dinner had been eaten (not Freddie, not yet. She needed to be properly prepared, and that could be done later) and they were sat in front of a warm fireplace. Will was slumped on a soft rug, back leaning against the couch, head resting against Hannibal's leg. Hannibal was sitting comfortably on the couch, reading, his free hand gently running through Will's hair. Will wanted to get up, to run, to fight, but he had no energy left, and he had been shown what would happen if he tried. Even speaking right now seemed unwise. He was worried that if he did anything Hannibal didn't ask of him, he would suffer.

He didn't cry though; his body wouldn't let him. Through the fear shined a bit of love. Since Freddie had died for real, Hannibal had done nothing but heap praise upon Will. His touch set Will's skin on fire and drew from him a smile. All his life, Will had been so starved for love and touch, and now, he was being given everything he craved, if only he would give in to it. Who cared if he had to commit atrocities to get it. It was worth it to be loved like he had never been before. There was only one thing that concerned him.

"Where are my dogs?" His voice was barely above a whisper, afraid of punishment.

Hannibal set his book aside and looked down at Will. His expression was hard to read, but his eyes had a softness to them.

"I've looked into that. Alana survived and is currently taking care of them."

Will nodded absently. "Good, as long as someone is watching them."

His hand reached up and felt the mask on his face, feeling the contours of the hard plastic. It had been removed for the bath and to eat, but had been swiftly replaced afterwards. It did not cut into his skin like the one put on him by the doctors had, but it wasn't exactly comfortable.

"Do I have to still wear this? I killed Freddie."

Hannibal's hand in Will's hair paused, reaching down to meet Will's hand and trace the curve of his jaw.

"I'm afraid that Freddie was only the beginning of your apology. I still can't completely trust you to not try and kill me when I turn my back. So, my love, I'm afraid the muzzle must remain for now."

Will did not respond. His eyes were drooping closed with exhaustion. Hannibal looked down at him with a smile.

“Sleep well my dear, we have work to do tomorrow.”

Will woke up back in the straitjacket, unsure how much time had passed. He was in a dark room, laying on something much softer than the metal table he had been strapped to previously. Looking around and letting his eyes adjust to the darkness, he saw he was in a bedroom. He seemed to be lying on a small cot at the foot of a large, king-sized bed.

Focusing, Will rolled his body over and managed to get his feet underneath him. He pushed up into a standing position, uncomfortable, but glad to be standing of his own volition. Looking around, he found the bed made and empty. He could guess who had been sleeping there. As he moved, he finally became aware of the jingling of the tags hanging from his collar. It occurred to him in that moment that they weren’t just meant to be insulting. They also made it impossible for him to sneak around. Hannibal wanted to always know where Will was, even if he couldn’t see him.

On a whim, he turned to leave the room, only realizing when he got to the door that he had no way of opening it with his arms secured. Instead, he opted to bash the full weight of his body against the wood. It accomplished little except making his shoulder ache. He did it again, and this time he was treated to another dose of electricity. Will was locked in place as all of his muscles contracted at once. He watched as the door swung open and revealed a disappointed looking Hannibal on the other side.

“There was no need for that, you could have just called for me.”

With the push of a button, the pain receded, and Will slumped to the ground.

“Bastard,” he managed to choke out between gasping breaths.

This earned him another brief shock. It was shorter, only lasting half a second, but it stole his breath away.

“We really need to work on your language.”

He knelt down to Will’s level, swiftly freeing him from the straitjacket once more. He was then lifted to his feet.

“Come along, breakfast is ready.”

Will obediently followed behind as Hannibal led him into a small dining room. In the little he had seen of the safehouse, Will realized that this house was much smaller and more modest than Hannibal’s previous home, all of the effort having seemingly gone into the elaborate murder basement. The view outside the windows told Will that they were seemingly in an isolated cabin of sorts in some snowy woods.

“Where are we?”

Hannibal followed Will's gaze out the window, staring out at the snowy expanse.

"Canada. I figured after that disaster of a dinner party, I figured it was best to leave country altogether. I had planned for us to originally go to Italy, but in your state, getting overseas was impractical."

With that, Will felt Hannibal's hand grab the back of his neck and he was guided to sit down at the table, a steaming plate already set out for him. When he was seated, Hannibal began undoing the straps on the muzzle, removing it with a surprising gentleness. He left it sat on the table next to Will's plate, a silent reminder of his place.

Once food was eaten and the muzzle was returned to Will's face, Hannibal led Will to the bathroom and provided him with a new set of warm clothes.

"You'll want to stay warm when we go out."

When Will was left alone in the bathroom, he finally breathed easy for the first time in a long while. He reached up, considering removing the muzzle, but paused. He was sure that Hannibal was listening at the door, and was certain any suspicious movement or sound would earn him another dose of pain. Instead, he changed and stepped out the door again, not wanting to see what happened if he kept his captor waiting.

"I'm ready."

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

> Heads up, this one gets very bloody because you get an actual description of the murder. Mostly it's just about Will being murderous and kinda horny.

Will breathed in deeply as the door was opened, feeling the cool, clean air hit his lungs. Compared to the basement he had woken up in, the snowy forest before him looked like heaven. He took one step forward, hearing the snow crunch under his boots. Then he took another, and another, and then he was breaking out into a full-on sprint. He didn't know where he was going, but he knew he needed to explore this new freedom he had been given.

He got maybe twenty feet before the pain reached him. He froze in place as the electricity pulsed through him. He could only listen as Hannibal approached him, his expression one of disappointment. As the pain disappeared, Will nearly collapsed into the snow, but was caught by Hannibal.

"I had so hoped you would behave, I had wanted to give you a taste of freedom."

Will was still catching his breath and did not respond. Only watching as Hannibal retrieved something from his pocket.

"I suppose freedom will have to wait until you can control yourself better."

There was a clicking sound, and Will realized that Hannibal had pulled out a leash. He tested its security by tugging on it slightly, jerking Will's face uncomfortably close to his.

"This is dehumanizing."

Hannibal placed a soft kiss on Will's forehead. "This is what you deserve for betraying me, my love. Come along now, we have hunting to do."

Will was unceremoniously pulled along like a dog behind Hannibal, but all he could focus on was the warmth spreading across his face from his forehead. Somehow, in all the strange intimacy the two had shared, they had never kissed. It filled him with a strange giddiness, one that eclipsed the anger and frustration he had been feeling only moments before. He smiled lazily as he trudged through the snow, only thinking now about how much he wanted to experience a real kiss, lips to lips, maybe more.

"What about Freddie?"

"Already dealt with before you woke up. What do you think breakfast was?"

There was little other conversation as they walked, until they reached a clearing. They stayed back among the trees, out of sight.

“What’re we doing here?”

“The man who lives in this house is a serial rapist, undeserving of any sympathy. I want you to kill him.”

It was only then that Will noticed that Hannibal was once more holding the hunting knife. Will regarded it with contempt. All the warm giddiness had drained out of him when he remembered what he was doing here. He looked at Hannibal with confusion, gesturing to the leash, a silent question about how he was supposed to carry out any murders in this state.

“I’ve already been invited over for coffee, so I’ll go in ahead and make sure the door is unlocked. You’ll come in a few minutes later and kill him. You can do it however you want, use the knife, use your hands, but however you do it, make him suffer, and try not to ruin too many of the organs.”

He pulled Will close for a moment, drinking in the sight of him, before unclipping the leash and reaching around to remove the muzzle. His hand cupped Will’s cheek for a moment, smiling faintly.

“Wait here.”

The muzzle and leash were tucked into Hannibal’s coat as he turned towards the cabin. Will waited patiently in the cold. Part of him considered running, though he was unsure where he would go. He barely knew where he was. Besides, a much larger part of Will was desperate to feel that rush again. He wanted more praise, more affection. Besides, who cared if this piece of shit died? It was better for the whole world if Will did this.

He stalked towards the front door, flexing his jaw, as the long time in the muzzle made the joints stiff. He slipped in as quietly as he could, one hand to his neck to muffle the jingling sound that accompanied his movements. He followed the sound of voices to a small dining room. Hannibal had managed to position himself so he could see the doorway where Will stood but his host could not. For a brief moment, he held Will’s gaze, before giving a barely perceptible nod.

Will rushed forward, grabbing the stranger and plunging the knife into his shoulder. The man stood and pushed Will away, looking at him in fear and anger. Hannibal did not move, only watched hungrily.

“Who the fuck are you?” The man seemed more angry than actually scared.

Will smiled, adrenaline flowing through his body. He rushed forward again, pinning the man against the wall, knife digging into his arm now. They struggled a bit, and the man knocked the knife out of Will’s grasp. This did little to deter him though, and Will instead switched tactics. He kicked the man hard in the dick, making him go down quickly clutching his groin. The spike of adrenaline made a laugh bubble up in Will’s throat. It was breathy and manic, and when it came out Will barely recognized it as his own.

He knelt down, knee on the guy's chest, and began tearing into him, fists connecting his face and chest and throat. The hits wouldn't kill, but they would hurt. The more he did, the better Will felt, it unlocked something deep in Will's heart that had been brewing for a while. It seemed that the more he killed, the more he wanted to kill. It was intoxicating. Will looked down at the bleeding man below him, who was now begging him to stop. It made Will's smile even wider. He paused for a moment, looking down at his work, it was beautiful.

"This is my design."

With a manic laugh, Will leaned down, hands on either side of the man's face. He stole one small glance back at Hannibal, who was still watching with what could be considered a look of pride. It filled him with a strange impulse. With a final smile, Will wrapped his teeth around his victim's throat and bit, hard. He felt his teeth tear through flesh and skin, and he ripped it away, blood pouring from the wound and into his mouth. It was warm and metallic, and filled him with a pleasure he could not describe. His tongue dipped into the wound, tasting the blood, and let out a sound akin to a moan.

He would have kept going, laughing as his victim twitched beneath him, but a pair of hands pulled him away.

"Control yourself Will. I appreciate the enthusiasm, but that's how you get sick. Raw blood does not sit well in the stomach."

Will looked at him, barely processing his words. His pupils were dilated, and his breathing was labored. Blood dripped from his mouth in a way that made him look like a vampire. He only paused for a moment, his eyes dipping down to Hannibal's lips, then he pulled the larger man closer and forced him into a bloody kiss. Hannibal seemed surprised for a moment, but quickly leaned into the kiss. It was brief and passionate affair, before Hannibal pulled away.

"We're not done yet. You still have work to do." He reached over and picked up the discarded hunting knife and handed it back to a shaking Will, who's adrenaline was beginning to wear off. "I know you've butchered fish before, and this is a very similar idea. I'll guide you through it."

It was a long and bloody affair, one that left Will's arms sore. When they were done, the meat was loaded into a cooler Hannibal had planted nearby. The two of them looked over what was left of their victim, eyes full of contempt.

"Well, Will, there's only one step left. Something must be done with him. How will you make him your art?"

The question gave Will pause; he hadn't thought that far ahead. They were in the woods, with little around. What could he do? He looked over the bloody body, mind racing. An idea came to him then, and that manic smile returned.

When Brian Stevens was found the next day, it was a gory sight. He was found naked, with most of his organs and one of his arms missing, hanging from a tree by a noose made of his own organs. His dick had been cut off and shoved down his throat. It was horrible and disgusting, but, to its creators, it was a beautiful work of art.

Chapter 4

Chapter Notes

> This one almost became a sex scene to be perfectly honest, but no one wants to read me trying to figure out what that looks like.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

On the walk back, Will was put back on his leash, but he was not muzzled again. He had earned a small taste of freedom for his work. His mind was fuzzy with adrenaline from the kill and the kiss. He could've been being led into the heart of a volcano, but he wouldn't have cared. His brain was far from his body right now.

He was led back to their cabin, where the collar was removed once more so that Will could clean the blood from himself. When he was alone in the bathroom, the gravity of what he had done finally sank in. He collapsed to the floor, shaking. His breath came in gasping bursts, and his chest felt like it was being squeezed. He had killed a man, again. He had strung his body up like a Christmas ornament. He had torn his fucking throat out with his fucking teeth.

The taste of blood in his mouth suddenly made him sick. He crawled over to the toilet and began heaving up blood. All the euphoria had left him, and he felt cold and hollow. He wished he could just pick one feeling. Either he was happy to do whatever Hannibal asked, or he was scared and shaking. He just wanted to be one thing, not always of two minds about everything.

"Will? Is everything alright?"

"Just leave me the fuck alone!"

There was the sound of a quiet *tsk* from the other side of the door. Will immediately felt fear for what consequences that outburst would have later.

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. You were right, I don't feel very well now."

There was no reply, though Will could have sworn he heard laughter and retreating footsteps. His nausea retreating, Will stood up shakily and stripped down, turning on the shower.

When he emerged from the bathroom, clean and calm again, Hannibal was waiting. Will, his anxiety forgotten upon seeing Hannibal's face again, with those eyes so full of pride, allowed the collar to be locked around his neck once more. He melted at the warm touch, and all the tension left his body. He was pulled forward again, and their lips met once more.

This kiss was longer than the one before, with Hannibal's tongue pushing its way into Will's mouth. The euphoria of the physical contact made Will's legs give out, and the only thing holding him up was Hannibal's arms. When they pulled apart, Will gasped for air, though Hannibal seemed composed as always.

"There, isn't that better my dear? Now, I'm going to make lunch. You can help if you'd like."

Will took a moment to respond, giving his brain time to return to Earth. Everything felt fuzzy and tingly.

"Yeah, yeah I'd like that."

That night, Will was returned to the muzzle and the straitjacket, it seemed Hannibal still didn't trust him that much. However, he was allowed to sleep on the bed with Hannibal this time instead of the basement or the tiny cot. The bed was soft and warm, and almost made up for the discomfort of Will's bindings. He found himself wrapped in Hannibal's arms, who seemed unbothered by Will's stiff position.

"I'm sorry if this is uncomfortable for you Will. If you keep behaving for me, however, I promise this won't be for much longer."

Will didn't respond. He was too busy trying to absorb all of the warmth from his lover/captor's body. He'd spent the rest of the day having praise be heaped upon him, and it had reduced him to a muttering, blushing mess. There was very little fight inside him at the moment, though it would surely return in the morning, when the soft warmth of Hannibal's clever words had worn off. For now, though, Will was entirely under his spell.

Hannibal ran his delicate hands through Will's hair, his touch setting Will's nerves alight with electricity. It sent an involuntary shudder down his spine and made his breath hitch. This seemed to amuse Hannibal.

"Am I bothering you my dear? Should I stop so you can sleep?"

Will fought to get words out. "No, don't stop, please." He was begging, but he didn't care. He needed to be touched gently, to be held. He wanted to feel something other than pain.

Soft lips pressed against his forehead. Will felt close to exploding from the sensation. Hannibal only laughed at him.

"I'm afraid you'll get nothing more than this until I know where your loyalties lie."

"With you, always with you." He was desperate now, pleading.

Hannibal shook his head. "I'm afraid I can't accept words alone. Your actions must show your truth."

“I’ve killed and butchered and made art for you, what more do you want?”

Hannibal smiled then, pulling Will close so their foreheads were touching. “I want you to look at me without picturing my death. I want your heart and your mind and your devotion. I want to know that you love me in a way that cannot be undone.”

Will didn’t know how to respond. He was lost in those eyes. Those eyes that seemed to go on for eternity. In the dark of the bedroom, they still seemed to shine.

“I’ll give you anything, anything you ask.” He wanted to reach out, to wrap his arms around Hannibal and prove to him how he felt, but his restraints wouldn’t let him.

“Then show me.” Hannibal smiled at Will. “But do it tomorrow, for now, sleep.”

And Will couldn’t refuse. His exhaustion caught up to him, and his eyes fell shut. The last sight he saw were those damn eyes, watching him like a cat watches a mouse. A predator watching prey.

Chapter End Notes

I promise there will be some kind of plot at some point, just let me figure out what that is.

Chapter 5

Chapter Notes

Here we go, this is resembles a plot evolving.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Jack Crawford had had an interesting two months since the disastrous “dinner party”. Part of him had wanted to leave the FBI and never look back. The other part of him couldn’t leave Will behind in the hands of that monster, no matter how willingly he may have run into them. Jack had sworn to save him.

Then his wife died. Only days after the events at Hannibal’s. That had certainly put a damper on Jack’s efforts. The funeral had been lovely.

Afterwards, Jack had redoubled his efforts. Not that it mattered much. If Hannibal was smart, which he was, he would have fled the country. Finding him now was going to be nigh impossible.

A week ago, Freddie Lounds had gone missing. She had returned to reporting with vigor after she revealed she was not truly dead. Viewership of her sight had increased tenfold. Now, with the news of her disappearance a week ago, and her head being found in a river along the American-Canadian border yesterday, people were even more interested.

Will and Hannibal had been missing for two months and all Jack Crawford had to show for his work was a dead wife and the head of a reporter crossing country borders. It was pitiful. Sure, this gave Jack an insight into where the two were hiding, but it was still a whole country to search where he had no jurisdiction. The FBI was beginning to lose interest, wanting Jack to focus his efforts on more pressing concerns on American soil. But he couldn’t give up on this, not when he knew it was ultimately his fault Will had been exposed to Dr. Lecter in the first place.

They must have been close to the border if Hannibal could kidnap Freddie and get back so quickly. The real question was how he was crossing the border without being seen. His and Will’s faces were sent out to every border outpost and every government agent, there was no way he could pass in and out without being recognized.

Correction: there was no way a normal person could do all that without being recognized. Hannibal Lecter was not normal.

The only real question was what Will’s role was in all of this. From what Jack could see while he was bleeding in the pantry, Hannibal had been angry at him, and had gutted him like a fish. Hannibal had enough medical skill that Jack was sure Will would be fine, but that was

two months ago. What condition was Will in now? Was he a prisoner? Was he complicit? Was he somehow the leader? Jack didn’t know. He wasn’t sure which answer he preferred.

Something inside him said that this wouldn’t be over until he went and found them himself.

Chapter End Notes

To clarify, I'm saying that all of this, including the bits with Will and Hannibal, takes place 2 months after the end of season 2. The bit where it mentions Freddie's head being found means this chapter takes place a day after the first chapter. Hannibal had had Freddie for a few days before Will woke up. I'll explain how he was unconscious that long soon I promise.

Chapter 6

The next day, Will had hoped Hannibal would give him a bit more freedom. Hannibal had seemed so pleased with him the day before, but apparently in the night he had changed his mind.

Will woke up alone in bed. This time, the door had been left open for him. With barely a second thought, Will got up out of the bed. The minute his feet hit the floor, his body was alight with agony. It was brief, but it caused Will to drop back onto the bed. His eyes drifted to the open doorway, where Hannibal now stood, shaking his head disapprovingly.

"I supposed I should have warned you, but the rules today are changing. Yesterday, you asked how you could prove to me you were loyal. You pleased me yesterday with your actions, but you could have been better. You attempted to damage the bedroom door, you swore, twice, you attempted to run away from me, and in general you were disobedient. I think we need to work on that." Hannibal approached Will, leash in hand again. "Today, you will prove to me that you can be perfectly obedient. Until you prove this to me, you are going to be given very little freedom. You are going to remain restrained and on my leash, and you will do nothing unless I tell you to."

Will opened his mouth to respond, but thought better of it. Hannibal seemed to notice.

"You may still speak, but choose your words carefully."

"Why don't you just believe me when I say I'm loyal to you?"

Hannibal shook his head, gently cupping Will's face, his hand was warm and strong. "Because you promised me your heart once before, and then you betrayed me to the FBI. After that, I find it hard to trust you."

"You said you forgave me."

"I did, but forgiveness and trust are different things. I have forgiven, but I have not forgotten." He stood up and moved to leave the room, dragging Will along on the leash behind him.

"If it makes any difference, I was never going to actually betray you, I went into your house to save you."

"But how can I believe you?"

Will was dragged into the dining room, where he was surprised to find only one chair and one table setting at the table. Hannibal must have seen Will's look of confusion, because he cracked an amused smile.

"I saw no reason to set a proper seat for you, since you won't be able to feed yourself in your current condition."

Will was forced into a kneeling position on the floor beside the chair, the leash looped around one of its legs to keep him in place. Once Hannibal had prepared a plate, he sat himself in the chair and began to eat, reading a newspaper. Will's stomach growled at the smell of food, but he was temporarily distracted by the date on the paper.

"Two months? I was unconscious for two months?"

Hannibal only spared him a glance. "I needed time to get things set up, so I let you spend some time in a medically induced coma."

Will's response was cut off when his stomach once again protested his empty state. This seemed to amuse Hannibal.

"Are you hungry Will?"

Will's stomach answered for him.

"If you want to eat, you need only to ask me. And do so politely, lest my fingers slip and hit that little button."

Will grimaced. "So, it's not enough to muzzle and collar me like a dog, you're going to make me beg like one too? Sitting at your feet?"

"Yes." Having eaten the last of his meal, Hannibal reached down to caress Will's face.

The touch made Will shiver. The spell began to fall over him again, clouding his mind. Was that all it took to make Will listen? A simple touch? Apparently yes, that was all it took to turn Will to putty in Hannibal's grasp.

Will took a moment to gather his words. "Can I please have something to eat? Please?"

Hannibal smiled, running a hand through Will's hair. "Of course, my dear." He stood up and returned to the kitchen. He came back with a newly filled plate, sitting it on the table. He sat back down in the chair before reaching to remove Will's muzzle. "I am trusting you not to bite me by doing this, please do not repeat your actions from yesterday."

With the muzzle removed, Hannibal picked up a forkful of food and held it in front of Will's face. Will regarded it with disdain.

"Really?"

"Come now Will, I thought you were hungry. Now, open."

Will heard a slight edge of annoyance, and understood the threat. He opened his mouth hesitantly. He was rewarded with a bite of the warm breakfast.

"How is it?"

Will wisely waited to finish chewing and swallowing his food before answering.

“Just as good as always.”

The answer seemed to please him.

“I’m happy to hear it.”

This was how most of the morning was spent, with Will having to beg Hannibal for even the most basic things, even to use the bathroom. It would have exhausted Will, if it weren’t for the fact that for every small show of obedience, Hannibal rewarded Will with small, affectionate touches. A caress here, a soft kiss to his forehead there. That was all it took to make Will go along with it all.

After lunch, Will found himself sat on the floor beside Hannibal’s desk chair. Hannibal seemed to be working on something, though Will could not tell what from his current position.

“What’re you working on?”

His pencil did not stop, but he stole a brief glance at Will. “I’m finishing a map of the nearby caves and hiking trails. It’s rather extensive, and I’ve spent a lot of time paying attention to you, so I haven’t managed to finish it yet. I want to have it all mapped out before we start hunting properly.”

“Caves?”

“Yes. The national park that this property is next to is known for its extensive cave systems. This also means that it has a high rate of lost hikers. Far too many have wandered off the trails and gotten lost or wandered into the caves to never been seen again.”

“An ideal place to take a victim or two without getting caught.”

“Indeed.”

“Are we going out today?”

Hannibal shook his head, still not pausing his work. “No, we have adequate food supplies for now. Besides, I’d like to have you properly trained before I let you off the leash again. Now, if you could be silent for a while, I need to concentrate.”

Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack stared angrily down at the map spread out before him. He only had one concrete crime he could pin to Hannibal (and maybe Will). That was the single mark on the map, right where Freddie Lounds' head had been found. Beside the map, Jack had the articles for over a dozen other murders in the same area. None of them he could be sure were what he was looking for. Most seemed too basic to attribute to Hannibal, and some didn't even have missing parts. It was likely the killer was lying low, trying to make Jack and the FBI lose interest. Or maybe he was waiting for something.

The only kill that truly caught Jack's eye was only reported an hour ago. A man named Brain stevens. He had been strung up in a tree, miles from his home by his own intestines and had had several organs and a whole arm removed. All of it reeked of Hannibal, except one thing. Most of Hannibal's previous victims had died due to the mutilations Hannibal had inflicted on him. This victim, however, had died of blood loss. Blood loss due to having his throat ripped out by human teeth.

Hannibal had done many things, but tearing out his victim's throat with his teeth wasn't one of them. Hannibal had always been neater, more composed. Using his teeth meant risking leaving evidence. Hannibal had certainly had a hand in this kill, but Jack had a feeling the real killer was someone else. He didn't want to think about who.

Stevens' body had been found several hours' drive from where Freddie's head had been dumped. Meaning that it was useless as a geographical clue.

"Where are you two?"

Will would be able to figure this out.

Jack shook his head to clear the thought away. No use getting hung up on things that wouldn't help him. He paused though. Maybe Will wasn't here to help him, but maybe trying to think like him wasn't a bad idea.

"Where would Hannibal go?"

Somewhere isolated. Will was in bad condition, he would want to avoid drawing suspicion, his thoughts responded, sounding strangely like Will Graham.

"Somewhere in the middle of nowhere. Great, that's most of Canada." Jack shook his head in exasperation.

He would also want to be somewhere where he can go after victims without much hassle. He's trying not to attract attention, so he might want somewhere he can make his victims disappear without much fanfare. Maybe somewhere with a high frequency of missing persons.

“Hiking trails.” Jack had worked in the FBI long enough to be familiar with the statistics surrounding ill-fated hikers. He was sure Hannibal was also familiar with them.

He stared down at the map. It didn’t have hiking trails marked, which made sense, most maps didn’t, but it did have one thing. Right between the two crime scenes, in the miles of wilderness that made up most of the country, was a national park.

“There you are.”

It was still a large area, and there was no guarantee he was right, but it was a clue, and that was more than he’d had in the last two months. The real challenge that this now presented was how exactly he, an American FBI agent, was supposed to get permission to start a manhunt for Will and Hannibal in Canada. In his heart, he already knew the answer. He was going on this hunt alone.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, now we really have a plot starting to form

Chapter 8

Chapter Notes

> Okay, this is where we actually get them having sex. It's not described, but it's actually happening now.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

This arrangement persisted for a full week. Every time Will thought he was close to earning his freedom, he made some small mistake that upset Hannibal and added time to his sentence. The longer it went on though, the more Will began to understand his situation. It wasn't until the middle of one sleepless night, though, that Will found himself truly accepting his position.

It was dark, and Will found himself wrapped in Hannibal's arms, listening to his quiet breathing. He didn't know what time it was, but he was certain the other man was asleep. It was here that Will realized three things.

1. There was no way Will could return to his old life.

If he ever went back, all he would get would be a one-way trip back to the mental institution. Or worse, a death sentence. He had done terrible things, and there was price for that.

2. The only safe place for him was with Hannibal.

Sure, Will could find an opportunity and run away, but where would he go? Will lacked the skill or know-how to remain on the run for long. He would certainly either end up living in a cave, slowly starving to death, or captured. If he wanted a good (relatively speaking) life outside of captivity, Will would have to stay with Hannibal.

3. Will Graham was unconditionally and irrevocably in love with Hannibal Lecter.

He had been for a while, if he really thought about it, but this moment was the first time he really put the words to it. Part of him wondered if it tied back to the pain and manipulation Hannibal had put him through. If he had fostered these feelings of dependency and obsession. It was incredibly likely, but Will was past caring. He liked being held and praised by Hannibal, liked how warm it made him feel.

The realization made his breath catch in his throat. He loved Hannibal, and he was pretty sure Hannibal loved him. It also occurred to Will at that moment that neither of them had really said it. Not out loud at least. They had certainly shown it in their actions.

Suddenly filled with a new feeling of giddiness, Will turned himself, with some difficulty due to his restraints and Hannibal's tight grip, until he was facing him. Will found that his head fit

perfectly in the space beneath Hannibal's chin. Will breathed in his scent and smiled.

"I love you Hannibal." He whispered the words into the darkness.

There was no verbal response, as Will was pretty sure he was asleep, but the arms wrapped around his body did seem to pull him in a bit closer.

Those words were what earned Will his freedom. Maybe it was only a coincidence that that morning Will was freed from his bindings, but he suspected that maybe he had been heard after all.

Will sighed with relief as the straitjacket and muzzle were removed and tucked away in the basement. "Finally. I was starting to lose feeling in my arms."

"I'll admit that I should have considered the harm the jacket would do." He gently massaged Will's shoulders, working out the stiffness that had accumulated.

Will's hand drifted up to the only restraint left, the collar. "So, are you going to take this off too?"

Hannibal sighed. "No, not now."

"I thought I had earned my freedom?" There was a slight hint of annoyance in his voice.

Hannibal ran a finger along the leather. "You have, but I quite like how this looks on you. And I want a bit of insurance in case you decide to be difficult again."

So, he wasn't fully trusted after all. That was fine, Will could live with that distrust if it meant the use of his arms. He took a moment to roll out his joints, savoring the free range of motion he now had. He paced a tentative circle around the living room, pausing at the window to survey the snowy expanse before him.

"Are we going out today?"

Hannibal joined him at the window. "I was considering it. We've eaten through our main meat stores, and I've finally mapped enough of the nearby area to feel secure in a hunt. How do you feel about it?"

Will's breath caught in his throat. How did he feel about it? In the moment, shedding blood filled him with ecstasy and desire, but when it was over, he felt cold and hollow. He spared a glance at Hannibal. He was watching him in a way that made Will's heart skip a beat. He so badly wanted Hannibal to look at him like that forever.

"I think we should."

Hours later, in the dying sunlight, Hannibal stood over the bodies of the three hikers he and Will had collected. Will, for his part, was busy butchering the last of the bodies. Crouched over the corpse, covered in blood, muttering reminders to himself about the process. Hannibal had had to stop Will a handful of times and redirect him, as it seemed that when his adrenaline spiked, he had a surprising urge to use his teeth and go for blood. It was an endearing trait, but not a practical one.

As Will finished packing the last of the meat into the cooler they had brought along, this urge seemed to strike him again. He raised his bloody hand to his mouth and began to lick it clean.

"Will."

The disapproving tone in Hannibal's voice brought Will back to his senses. He put his tongue back in his mouth and switched to wiping his bloody hands on his equally bloody shirt. With the cooler closed, Will turned to look at Hannibal, still half-crouched over the body.

"Sorry."

"It's alright. I just worry the excess of blood will make you sick again." He reached down and gently pet Will's curly hair. "Now, you can drag them back to the place where we dug the graves. No need to draw attention by doing anything excessive."

Hannibal began to pull the cooler along behind him with one hand and a body with the other, trusting Will to follow. He did, dragging the other two bodies along behind him. He didn't speak, only breathed heavily, the tags on his collar jingling softly.

Hannibal's description of Will being a hunting dog had proven to be an accurate one. It seemed that when Hannibal pointed his love at a quarry, Will was happy to attack. A single, mindless bloodlust that seemed to only want to destroy and consume. It set Hannibal's heart aflame in a way nothing else ever had.

When they got back to the gravesite they had cleared before, they dumped in the corpses unceremoniously. Will was left with the task of filling them in. He didn't mind, the repetitive task allowed him to focus on something other than the strange arousal building within him at the sight of all the blood.

Once the bodies were buried, Hannibal passed Will his coat that had been previously removed. It hid the worst of the blood, just in case they passed any other hikers. The walk back home was cold, the wind and snow slowly picking up as the sky grew dark. Will no longer had a distraction from his feelings. While he was no longer filled with that intense bloodlust, how was now filled with another kind of lust. A kind that he only managed to contain until they were back in the warm house. The moment the door closed behind them, Will leapt at Hannibal, pushing him against a wall. The movement surprised Hannibal, who was met by the sight of a bloody Will, a wide, manic smile on his face and his pupils blown wide. He smelled like lust and dirt and blood, an intoxicating combination.

"What are you doing Will?" It wasn't a real question. Hannibal knew the answer, he only wanted to make Will admit it.

The question seemed to return Will to his senses momentarily, pausing to look down at his bloody hands clutching onto Hannibal's previously clean shirt with a look of embarrassment. Then he looked up again, eyes finding Hannibal's lips, and that smile returned.

"I'm proving my loyalty." He pushed forward, forcing his bloody mouth against Hannibal's.

Hannibal permitted it, opening his mouth slightly to let Will's bloody tongue into his mouth. The kiss was hot and metallic, and when it broke apart Will was left gasping for air around manic laughter.

"If you want something from me Will, you need to ask me. And you need to do it properly."

Will looked up at him, a desperate look on his face. He knew what he had to say, but his dying dignity made him hesitate. Was he willing to beg for this? From Hannibal of all people?

"Please Hannibal, please fuck me."

He smiled in that vague way he always did when he got his way.

"Well, since you asked so nicely."

Chapter End Notes

Yes, that was actually a modified Twilight quote, I thought it was funny.

Chapter 9

Chapter Notes

> This one is short but I just want to clarify this takes place about a day or two after the last chapter, meaning this is over a week after Jack was first shown.

Jack stared at the email that had been waiting for him when he got to work that morning. It was formatted like a card, wishing him a happy thanksgiving. That's right, thanksgiving was last week. It was the picture that concerned Jack most though. It showed Hannibal and Will sat at a beautifully set table, a feast of food set out before them. They stared into the camera with smug smiles. The text below it simply read "wish you were here".

Jack was certain he knew what the food on the table actually was, but what really made him sick was the look on Will's face. There was no pain or fear. That was not the face of a man who was being held hostage. The only thing truly out of place in the image was the fact that Will was wearing what appeared to be a collar, a visual metaphor for the hold Hannibal now had on Will.

The email had been sent from a burner account, and when the IP had been tracked, it had lead them to a public library in Detroit, making the clue another dead end. The taunt was clear. They were saying "come and get us". It irritated Jack. He had wanted to find Hannibal and rescue Will, to prove that he hadn't broken Will completely and that he could still be brought back into the light. This told him that wasn't going to happen. Will was lost to him. It would be smart to distance himself from this case. It was an international case now, there were other people to take care of it. Jac had other cases that needed his attention.

But he couldn't leave this alone. His conscious wouldn't let him. He would go and kill Hannibal himself if he had to, which was beginning to seem like the case.

Jack had turned in his resignation that night. No one asked why he was leaving. No one needed to. Now, he was packing his bags to catch a plane the next day. He was going to hunt Hannibal down himself, and he was going to try and bring Will back into the light, a task he knew was probably futile. He still had to try.

He'd secured a reservation at a hotel near the national park he was certain Hannibal was hunting in. Several hikers had disappeared in the last few weeks, though Jack had no way of knowing which ones might have actually been Hannibal's doing, if any. It was a massive area, one that Jack would not be able to search easily, but he had to try.

He had to try.

Chapter 10

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Time passed slowly in the snowy forest. Endless days punctuated by violence and sex between the two killers. Every once and a while, the two ventured out into the nearby town, Will always wearing a scarf to hide the collar, not wanting to draw attention. These trips were few and far between, as the two had become quite self-sufficient. Before Will knew it, it was only five days until Christmas. Not that that really meant anything. It wasn't like he had family to visit.

On this specific cold morning, Hannibal had insisted on going into town alone. The thought had distressed Will, but he couldn't stop him from going. This meant that, for the first time since he had woken up restrained in the basement, Will was completely alone.

The silence in the house felt suffocating. Will could barely stand it. He was fighting off a panic attack, trying to keep his breathing even and steady. He had wedged himself underneath the dining table, feeling oddly secure in the small space. Some part of him wondered if this anxiety stemmed from the intense dependency Hannibal had drilled into him. Making him unable to function when the other man was not around. That part of him was probably right, but he couldn't do anything about his feelings right now. Now he had to focus on not passing out.

He wasn't sure how long he was down there beneath the table, but eventually he heard the sound of the door opening and footsteps entering the house. Realistically, he knew it was likely just Hannibal, but for some reason his heart was gripped with fear. He was sure that law enforcement had found him and was going to take him away. His pulse and breathing sped up, until Will was sure his heart was going to leap out of his chest. The footsteps were getting closer and closer, and he half heard someone calling his name, but his panicked mind could not process the voice.

The footsteps stopped abruptly at the doorway to the dining room.

"Will? What are you doing under the table?"

This time, Will recognized the voice. He sprung from underneath the table and wrapped his arms around Hannibal's neck. He was only now able to realize that he was crying.

"I was so scared. Please, don't leave me alone again, I can't stand it."

Hannibal held Will tightly, one hand playing with his messy curls. "I apologize my dear. I don't think I realized how much I had allowed this codependence to develop. We may need to work on that." He breathed in the smell of Will's fear, and he felt a bit guilty.

"Why did you leave me here anyway?" The panic was subsiding now, and Will was able to stabilize his breathing.

Hannibal smiled. “I wanted to surprise you.”

He led Will back to the front door, which had been left ajar. He was led outside to a wonderful sight. There, strapped into the back of the beat-up truck they had bought for a cheap price (much to Hannibal’s annoyance, but Will had pointed out that it would draw less attention than a fancy sports car), was a real Christmas tree. The sight banished the last of Will’s anxiety and made his face split into a wide smile.

“Oh, it’s beautiful.”

Hannibal wrapped an arm around his shoulders, pulling him close. “Happy early Christmas Will. I wanted to get you a gift for our first holiday together, but that’ll have to wait until the actual day. For now, I was hoping we could decorate the tree together.”

Will leaned into the embrace, fitting his head beneath Hannibal’s chin. “That sounds perfect.” He paused. “But I didn’t get you anything.”

“You didn’t need to. You will be my present this year.”

That night, the two sat on the couch staring at their handy work. The tree was beautifully decorated in reds and golds, with an elegant glass star perched on top. Between that, the mulled wine they were sipping on, and the roaring fire, the room had a festive and homey atmosphere. Will was cuddled into Hannibal's side. He couldn’t remember the last time he had truly enjoyed the holidays.

“The tree looks amazing, but I still wish we could have used my ideas a bit more.” Will’s words slurred a bit, already a bit tipsy.

Hannibal laughed and buried his nose in Will’s hair, breathing in the sweet scent of his shampoo. “As much as I admired your suggestions my dear, I fear that the mess would have spoiled and created quite a mess come Christmas morning.”

“Maybe, still would have looked nice.” He downed the rest of his drink before adjusting so that he was fully laying down, head in Hannibal’s lap. “You heard me that night, didn’t you?”

Hannibal took a thoughtful sip. “I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“You just want me to say it again.” Will reached up, running his fingers along Hannibal’s hard jawline.

His lips quirked up into a barely perceptible smile. “Perhaps.”

Will sighed, taking Hannibal’s free hand in his, feeling every contour of his fingers before pressing them to his lips, savoring the warmth they carried.

“I love you, Hannibal.”

Hannibal smiled wider, setting his glass of wine aside. In a single, swift movement, he lifted Will into a sitting position in his lap, their faces only inches apart.

“I love you too Will. I thought that was obvious by now.”

“It’s still nice to hear it.”

“You have a point. Perhaps we should say it more often.”

Any reply Will might have had was cut off as their lips crashed together. The kiss quickly turned passionate and hungry, using teeth as much as tongue and lips. Hannibal adjusted, breaking the kiss and moving his lips down Will’s jaw and down to his neck. As he kissed Will’s skin, he took small bites. Though small bites quickly became larger and began to draw blood. The sensation made Will shiver with pleasure.

“Fuck Hannibal. I thought you didn’t like doing it on the couch.”

There was a quiet laugh. “Consider this my holiday spirit. We can worry about the mess later.” He suddenly sounded just as needy and tipsy as Will felt.

It was a sleepless night for both of them.

Chapter End Notes

Surprise! It's a Christmas fic! Everyone knows that holiday spirit pairs best with murder and cannibalism.

Chapter 11

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

Jack pulled his jacket tightly around himself. It was currently just before sunset on Christman Eve, and Jack was doing the same thing he had been doing for days now. He had spent days wandering the snowy, endless forest between the two kills he had noted. He wasn't sure what he thought he was going to accomplish. Maybe he thought he would get lucky and just happen upon them on the trails. It wasn't likely.

The trails had become nearly abandoned, as the cold, snowy weather and the approaching holiday meant people were spending time inside, where it was warm. Jack didn't mind the cold all that much, it help keep him awake so he could keep going.

As he walked, Jack had the distinct feeling that he was being followed. He had learned over his years in law enforcement to trust those instincts, so he kept his head on a swivel and his ears perked. He wasn't going to be suck up on.

Or maybe he was.

Will and Hannibal looked down from the shadowy ridge they were perched on. They made sure to stay out of immediate sight, but they saw the figure on the trail below them, and Will was suddenly afraid.

"We should go."

"Patience my dear. You can't spend your whole life in fear. Besides, didn't you once promise me that we would kill Jack before we left?"

Will nodded, eyes never leaving the sight of Jack. "Yeah but…"

"But you were lying to me?"

This broke Will's concentration, and he looked back to Hannibal, indignant. "I told you I wasn't. I just… I don't think it ever really hit me what I was agreeing to. I don't know if I can kill Jack. Can't you do it?"

Hannibal shook his head. "You have to do it yourself, otherwise you will never stop being afraid of him coming after you."

What Will didn't know was that this was the final test from Hannibal. Hannibal wanted to know that Will was willing to sever all ties with his previous life. Will had no clue that

Hannibal had emailed Jack. Will had been told that photo was only for their own memory. Hannibal wanted to know for a fact that Will had no one but him to run to.

“Play with him a bit, have your fun, and then we can have a proper Christmas feast.”

He handed Will the knife and pointed him down the trail, holding him there only long enough to place a gentle kiss on his lips. A kiss that sent Will’s heart hammering in his chest, and made his mind clouded. Hannibal was right, Will was done being afraid.

Jack paused. That feeling of being followed was stronger now. The sounds of the forest set him on edge. A snapping twig made his hand reach for his gun and whip his head around, but nothing was there. He was able to play it off in his mind as being only a squirrel or something.

The noise that really unnerved him was a sound that he could almost describe as wind chimes. Not exactly a sound you’d expect to hear this deep in the forest. It seemed to echo all around him at first, or maybe its source was circling him. Eventually, its source seemed to solidify suddenly behind him, and its footsteps crunched through the snow.

Jack turned slowly, drawing his gun, not sure what he would see. Or maybe he was too sure, and he didn’t want to be right.

“Hello Jack.”

The man before him had certainly once been Will Graham, but now he wasn’t so sure. He looked oddly more well rested than Jack had ever seen him, as if he had been sleeping much better in recent weeks. His hair had gotten a bit longer, though it was expertly styled, likely under Hannibal’s watchful eye. In his hand he held a large hunting knife, and he looked like he knew how to use it. Jack was sure he did.

“What are you doing Will?”

Will looked him over, clearly wrestling with something in his mind.

“I’m doing what I need to do. I can’t spend the rest of my life afraid of you finding me again.”

“You don’t have to do this Will. Hannibal is manipulating you. Just drop the knife and we can go home. I’ll do my best to help you.”

Will laughed then. It was a humorless sound, verging on manic. It was a sound Jack had never heard from Will before.

“Manipulating me? Really? Like you manipulated me into not leaving the job? If you had just let me leave, none of this would be *FUCKING HAPPENING RIGHT NOW*! This is a grave you dug for yourself Jack! The only person that can help me now if Hannibal!” Will’s gaze shifted upward, an expression of awe and reverence on his face. When he spoke again, it

was almost a whisper. “He showed me the best version of myself. He doesn’t expect me to hide myself like other people do. He loves even the darkest things in me.”

Jack followed Will’s gaze, his eyes landing on the tall ridge that ran beside the trail. Standing atop it was a shadowy figure. Jack was sure that it was Hannibal, surveying his disgusting work. That brief distraction was apparently all Will needed. He rushed Jack, knocking the gun from his hands. Even though Will was smaller than Jack, he had a feral strength to him. The surprise of the strike sent Jack to the ground, a knife plunged into his shoulder. Will pulled the knife back out, before stabbing it in again, this time in Jack’s stomach.

“Will, this isn’t you. Please, stop.”

This gave Will pause, and for a moment, Jack thought he had gotten through to Will. Then, his face split into a manic smile.

“Are you begging me Jack? Is that what’s happening right now? Because if it is, I think you should do it again. It feels good.” This time the knife went in Jack’s chest, though it seemed to have missed anything vital. “And, just so you know, this absolutely is me, Jack. This is what was always inside of me. I just needed Hannibal to stop me from being afraid to show it.”

The stabs came faster now, more frantic. Jack couldn’t speak anymore, only scream as his blood soaked into the snow. Will was laughing now, as if Jack’s pain brought him immense amusement. As Jack lay there, all the fight slowly bleeding out of him, another figure moved to stand over him. Hannibal had descended from his perch now, happy to watch his protégé finish his training.

Will paused his onslaught momentarily, staring transfixed at the bloody knife in his hand. Hannibal, smiling, placed a hand on his shoulder.

“You’re doing wonderful my dear. But if you want to have time to help me with dinner, I suggest you stop playing with your food.”

Will, who seemed to be in a kind of trance now, nodded, still smiling. He handed the knife to Hannibal, an action that confused Jack.

“Will, Will please stop this. Please! I’ll leave! I’ll never tell anyone where you are!” Jack was lying, of course, but he needed to try and save his life. “Just stop and I’ll-”

Jack was cut off as Will’s teeth sunk into his throat. The last thing Jack saw was Will, with crazed eyes and a mouth full of blood, and Hannibal standing over him, looking proud.

Chapter End Notes

Okay, there is an epilogue planned, so stick around for something sappy, but the main story does end here. I hope you enjoyed.

Epilogue

Chapter Notes

> Just a mostly sweet finale, though I admit that we started to leave the territory of implied sexual content, and this might just be sexual content, even if they aren't outright fucking.

“Will, are you coming? I have your gift for you.”

“Just give me a minute. I’ll be right out.”

Hannibal smiled absently, staring up at their Christmas tree. Will had ended up getting his way, as much as Hannibal wasn’t fond of the mess. Now, the star of their tree had been replaced by Jack’s head. A bloody display of holiday cheer. They had even put a Santa hat on him, just to be funny.

Hannibal was distracted by his thoughts when Will came into the room.

“I know you said I didn’t need to give you a gift, but I couldn’t just give you nothing. So, I thought about how you said I was your gift, and I figured I should at least wrap it for you.”

Will was wearing very little, only in his boxers and a Santa hat. A bright red ribbon had been tied in a bow around his collar. It was enough to make Hannibal want to laugh. He fought the urge down, certain it could ruin the moment. Instead, he smiled and stepped forward to wrap one of his arms around Will.

“You spoil me my dear. I think I’ll wait to open this gift though.” He pulled his other hand out from behind his back. “Let me give you your gift first.”

Then, Hannibal did something that he had never done for anyone else. Hannibal fell to one knee before Will, a look of what could almost be described as worship on his face. In his hand was a small velvet box. He opened it to reveal a simple golden band.

“Will, I recognize that this isn’t something that we could ever do in a legal sense, but I want to offer it symbolically.” He picked the ring up out of the box, and Will could have sworn he had tears in his eyes. “William Graham, will you be mine for the rest of time?”

Will didn’t know what to say. It was a tender moment he was not used to seeing from Hannibal.

“Dr. Lecter, are you asking me to marry you?” His tone was mocking, but his face was genuine.

“I suppose I am. Do you accept?”

Will nodded and silently held out his hand. Hannibal slipped the ring on with ease, leaving Will wondering how he got his ring size. Hannibal stood, and he and Will fell into a passionate kiss. The force of which led to Will being pinned against the wall, with Hannibal's tongue in his mouth. After a few minutes, Hannibal broke off the kiss.

"Happy Christmas darling."

"Merry Christmas Hannibal."

Hannibal's eye dipped downwards to Will's neck, and the shining red ribbon.

"I supposed I should open my own gift now."

"It'd be a shame not to."

Hannibal didn't respond audibly. Instead, his teeth dipped down and tore away the ribbon, before he lifted Will up and carried him to the couch. He set him down with none of his usual softness, this was feral and passionate, a version of Hannibal that was rarely seen. Once Will was on his back on the couch, Hannibal straddled across his lap, he turned his attention to his boxers. He ran his fingers along the waistband. The motion made Will shiver. This brought a wicked gleam to Hannibal's eye.

"Would you like me to remove these for you my dear?"

Will rolled his eyes, a red blush spreading across his face as he became more aroused. "I don't see how we can have sex if you don't." His sarcasm was undermined by the needy whine in his voice.

Hannibal chuckled, leaning over Will. "I just want to make my gift last. I think I want to see how far we can get with the boxers still on."

His hands began to roam Will's body, noting what locations seemed to make him shiver most. As Will began to turn more and more red, Hannibal switched tactics, trailing kisses all across his exposed skin, occasionally leaving small bite marks. These marks joined the ones from the other night. Hannibal savored the taste of Will. Part of him still desired to eat Will, to make him part of himself forever. And maybe one day he would fall victim to those urges. But, for now, Hannibal would savor Will. He would let each taste linger on his tongue. He would learn what every part of Will felt like in his mouth, in his hands.

He would let this moment of bliss stretch out into eternity. Just himself, Will, and Jack Crawford's head impaled on top of a Christmas tree. It seemed to the two of them that life from this point on would be prefect, if only every moment was like this.

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